

Cohort Phase II-III Appeals

Frequently Asked Questions

June 22, 2023

1. What are the key dates for the 2022-23 Cohort Phase II-III Appeals Process?

Phase II Key Dates

- Submission Window: July 17-August 4, 2023
- Initial Appeals Response: August 11, 2023
- Remediation Window: August 14-18, 2023
- Final Appeals Response: August 25, 2023
- **Phase II tasks shall be completed by 5 p.m. CST on August 18, 2023**, including (1) report summer graduates in EIS; (2) import the complete student transcript data (extract 80) in EIS for the 2023 graduating cohort (**optional**); and (3) submit 60-day appeals. All issues regarding these three tasks shall be addressed by the end of the Phase II remediation window as the data updated during Phase II will be finalized by the end of the Phase II process.

Phase III Key Dates

- Submission Window: August 28-September 8, 2023
- Initial Appeals Response: September 15, 2023
- Remediation Window: September 18-20, 2023
- Final Appeals Response: September 26, 2023
- **Phase III tasks shall be completed by 5 p.m. CST on September 20, 2023**, including (1) submit appeals for summer graduates (only for appealable situations); (2) submit appeals for receiving students because of a 60-day appeal approval; (3) submit cohort appeals for federal graduation rate reporting (**new**). All issues regarding the appeals shall be addressed by the end of the Phase III remediation window as the data updated in Phase III will be finalized by the end of the Phase III process. In this phase, districts can also review their preliminary graduation rate in the Cohort application; however, this data will not reflect possible changes resulting from the Phase III appeals.

Please refer to [section 3](#) of the 2022-23 Cohort Phase II-III Appeals Guide for more information regarding the required tasks for Phase II-III appeals.

2. What action should be taken by a district that finds a student who spent less than 60 days in the school or district?

Students who are enrolled less than 60 days in a school or district are eligible to be removed and returned to the school or district in which they were enrolled for the majority of their high school career. These changes will be submitted using the [2022-23 Graduation Cohort Phase II Appeals Form](#) during **Phase II only** as an appeal. Please refer to [section 5.1](#) of the 2022-23 Cohort Phase II-III Appeals Guide for more information regarding submitting Phase II appeals.

3. What action should be taken by a district that receives a student because of another district's 60-day appeal?

Districts can submit an appeal for students they received because of another district's 60-day appeal. The appeal must be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., enrollment record). This type of appeal can only be

submitted during **Phase III** using the [2022-23 Graduation Cohort Phase III Appeals Form](#). Please refer to [section 5.2](#) of the 2022-23 Cohort Phase II-III Appeals Guide for more information regarding submitting Phase III appeals.

4. Why is the Tennessee Department of Education (department) updating the graduation rate for federal reporting purposes?

The department is required to update its federal graduation rate reporting method starting with the 2022-23 accountability cycle to comply with federal requirements. Federal guidelines require the department to calculate the four-year graduation rate by only including students who complete **all required coursework** and graduate with a regular diploma (also known as traditional diploma) or an Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD) within four years and a summer as a high school graduate in his or her original cohort.

Currently, the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) [Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06](#) and [High School Policy 2.103](#) provide an alternative pathway for students with a qualifying disability who have deficits in mathematics and science as documented in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). This alternative pathway conflicts with the federal guideline; and the department will be engaging with stakeholders as we work toward alignment.

5. How will the federal graduation rate be used in school accountability?

The federal graduation rate will be used to evaluate school performance on the Graduation Rate indicator, which has 5% weight in the high school accountability. It will also be used to identify Priority/Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools. Any school with a graduation rate less than 67% will earn Priority status; any school with a graduation rate less than 67% for a given student group will earn ATSI designation during an identification year.

6. How will the Tennessee graduation rate be used in school accountability?

The Tennessee graduation rate will be used to evaluate school performance on the *Ready Graduate* indicator, which has 20% weight in the high school accountability. Additionally, students who receive a regular diploma per SBE's graduation rule and policy will be used as the denominator of the ACT/SAT participation rate calculation.

7. How will the federal graduation rate and the Tennessee graduation rate be used in district accountability?

Both the federal graduation rate and the Tennessee graduation rate will be used to evaluate district performance on the Graduation Rate indicator, which has 16.7% weight in district accountability. Specifically, districts will be measured across three pathways:

- absolute performance, which will represent the percent of graduates per federal definition (i.e., federal graduation rate);
- graduation rate AMO targets, calculated based on the federal graduation rate); and
- value-added measure, which calculates the difference in the district's percent of *Ready Graduates* to the prior year as compared to statewide performance. Tennessee's graduation rate is used to inform *Ready Graduate* Rate.

The final score for the district Graduation Rate indicator is the value-added score averaged with **the better score** between their absolute performance and AMO targets.

8. Which graduation rate will be publicly released?

Both graduation rates will be publicly released on the [Data Downloads webpage](#) and will be reported on the annual Tennessee State Report Card.

9. Which graduation rate will be used for teacher evaluations?

Per federal regulations, the department now calculates and reports two graduation rates, the federal graduation rate and the Tennessee graduation rate (see [Q4](#) for more information on how each graduation rate is calculated). For educator evaluation, the department will continue to use the Tennessee graduation rate as an achievement measure option. The Tennessee graduation rate includes both students receiving regular and alternate academic diplomas, as per the State Board of Education [Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06](#) and [High School Policy 2.103](#). For more information regarding teacher evaluation, please contact Team.Questions@tn.gov.

10. How will the department verify the federal graduation rate?

In Phase II, districts may import the complete student transcript data in EIS. The department will then use the enrollment data and student transcript data, when available, to identify an **exclusion list** comprised of students who should be removed from the numerator of the federal graduation rate calculation per federal guidelines. The exclusion list will include any students who received a regular diploma but did not receive a credit in Algebra II/Integrated Math III and/or Chemistry or Physics (see [Section 3.1.1](#) of the 2022-23 Cohort Phase II-III Appeals Guide). In Phase III, districts will be able to download the exclusion list from the Accountability application. Districts shall review the exclusion list and submit appeals, as needed, to finalize the list for the federal graduation rate calculation.

11. What are the appealable issues for verifying the federal graduation rate?

Students who received a regular diploma without any record of receiving a math credit in Algebra II or Integrated Math III course or receiving a science credit in Chemistry or Physics will be included in the exclusion list. Districts shall submit appeals **ONLY** for students who earned an Algebra II/Integrated Math III credit and Chemistry/Physics **OR** who completed a college-level course as a substitution for Algebra II/Integrated Math III or Chemistry/Physics. Districts must submit a transcript or a Student Information System (SIS) report for each appealed record as supporting documentation. When submitting an appeal supported by district substitution policy, districts must also submit the written district substitution policy as a supporting documentation (See [Question 13](#) for more information regarding substitution policy). For more information on appealable issues and the appropriate supporting documentation, please refer to [section 4.1.5](#) of the 2022-23 Cohort Phase II-III Appeals Guide.

12. What will the department review on the student's transcript/SIS report?

The department will look for confirmation that the student earned 1.0 credits for Algebra II/Integrated Math III and earned 1.0 credits for Chemistry/Physics. If the transcript/SIS report does not show that the students earned full credit for the course, the appeal will be denied.

13. What is a district substitution policy?

[SBE Academic Program Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.03\(7\)](#) states, "Local education agencies (LEAs) shall award high school credit to students who successfully complete college-level courses aligned to a graduation requirement course, including general education and elective focus courses." See also [SBE Graduation Substitutions Policy 3.103](#) (currently pending final approvals). An appropriate district substitution policy should, at a minimum, include a comprehensive list of all eligible college-level courses that provides a clear guideline for schools regarding which college-level courses can be used for course substitutions in all subject areas that meet SBE graduation requirements. The list should include (1) subject area, (2) type of college-level course (e.g., International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge program, advanced placement, dual enrollment, local dual credit, state dual credit, etc.), (3) course name, and (4) course code. The course name and course code should be the same as the information presented in the EIS or SIS transcript.

14. How is the exclusion list identified? Does the exclusion list only include students in special education?

As stated in [Question 10](#), the exclusion list is based on course enrollment data in EIS and includes students receiving a regular diploma without any records of receiving an Algebra II/Integrated Math III credit and a Chemistry or Physics credit. This list is not limited to students in special education.

15. Where can districts download the exclusion lists?

Districts may download the exclusion lists from the Accountability application. Districts will find the exclusion list under the subsection titled “Additional Verification Files” on the File Download tab.

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